

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Specification

The Examiner has objected to the specification, insofar as it does not contain titles/sub-titles for the various sections.

In response to this objection, the specification is being amended to contain titles/sub-titles for the various sections.

35 USC 102

The Examiner is alleging that the subject-matter of claims 1 to 5, 11, 13 to 19, 27 to 31, 34, 39 and 40 is anticipated by Podlipec *et al* (US-6038969). This is not the case.

The independent claims (claims 1, 39 and 40) each require *inter alia* that the at least one engagement element comprises a body and **two** arms, that is, a first, engagement arm and a second, biasing arm.

Podlipec *et al* does not disclose an engagement element which includes two arms, in the manner as required by claims 1, 39 and 40.

The Examiner is alleging that the hooking pins (6), which extend from the tensioning bar (5), provide a first, engagement arm, and that the part of the tensioning bar (5) which is engaged by the tensioning tube (4) provides a second, tensioning arm.

It is submitted that the hooking pins (6) and the tensioning bar (5) together provide a single, common arm. Indeed, the International (PCT) Examiner has previously confirmed in the International Preliminary Examination Report [paragraph 3] that the independent claims (claims 1, 39 and 40) distinguish over Podlipec *et al* by requiring two arms.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the subject-matter of the independent claims (claims 1, 39 and 40) is patentably distinguished over the disclosure of Podlipec *et al*.

As regards the dependent claims (2 to 5, 11, 13 to 19, 27 to 31 and 34), it is submitted that these claims are also allowable at least for the reason that they depend upon an allowable independent claim.

35 USC 103

Claims 6, 7 and 38

The Examiner is alleging that the subject-matter of claims 6, 7 and 38 is unpatentable over Podlipec *et al* in view of Hillstrom *et al* (US-4580361). This is not the case.

Claims 6 and 7, in being dependent upon on claim 1, and claim 38 each require *inter alia* that the at least one engagement element comprises a body and **two** arms, that is, a first, engagement arm and a second, biasing arm.

Podlipec *et al* does not disclose an engagement element which includes two arms, in the manner as required by claims 1 and 38, as discussed above.

The Examiner is specifically alleging that it would have been obvious to the skilled person to modify the frame unit of Podlipec *et al* in accordance with the teaching of Hillstrom *et al* to provide the tensioning bar (5) of Podlipec *et al* with the disclosed pivoting mechanism (34) of Hillstrom *et al*.

However, the Examiner has failed to provide any motivation as to why the skilled person would have contemplated the application of the pivoting mechanism (34) of Hillstrom *et al*, which is directed to entirely unrelated art, in being directed to a device for sign panels.

Indeed, the stated objective of Podlipec *et al* is to provide a frame unit which is simple and inexpensive [column 1, lines 36 to 39], and yet the modification suggested by the Examiner is contrary to this teaching of Podlipec *et al*, in introducing additional complexity.

It is submitted that the skilled person would not have contemplated the modification of Podlipec *et al* in a manner which is contrary to the express teaching of that document.

This notwithstanding, Podlipec *et al* cannot be constructed in the manner suggested by the Examiner to provide the tensioning bar (5) with the disclosed pivoting mechanism (34) of Hillstrom *et al*.

Podlipec *et al* necessarily requires that the tensioning bars (5) be fitted subsequent to the tensioning tubes (4) and the corner pieces (20) which fluidly connect the tensioning tubes (4), as the corner pieces (20) and the tensioning tubes (4) have to be fitted into the frame member (2) before the tensioning bars (5) [see, for example, Figure 2], and, once fitted, the corner pieces (20) and the tensioning tubes (4) would then prevent the sliding fitting of the tensioning bars (5) as required by the pivoting mechanism (34) of Hillstrom *et al* [see, for example, Figure 1].

Accordingly, it is submitted that the subject-matter of claims 6, 7 and 38 is patentably distinguished over the disclosures of Podlipec *et al* and Hillstrom *et al*.

Claims 8 to 10, 12, 20 to 23, 33 and 41

The Examiner is alleging that the subject-matter of claims 8 to 10, 12, 20 to 23, 33 and 41 is unpatentable over Podlipec *et al* in view of Williams (US-6289804). This is not the case.

Claims 8 to 10, 12, 20 to 23 and 33, in being dependent upon on claim 1, and claim 41 each require *inter alia* that the at least one engagement element comprises a body and **two** arms, that is, a first, engagement arm and a second, biasing arm.

Podlipec *et al* does not disclose an engagement element which includes two arms, in the manner as required by claims 1 and 41, as discussed above.

As regards claims 8, 9 and 41, the Examiner is specifically alleging that it would have been obvious to the skilled person to modify the frame unit of Podlipec *et al* in accordance with the teaching of Williams to provide the coil springs (9) of Williams in place of the tensioning tubes (4) of Podlipec *et al*.

This alleged modification of Podlipec *et al* is not possible. In the frame unit of Podlipec *et al*, the tensioning tubes (4) cannot be replaced by coil springs (9) which provide a permanent biasing force, as then the frame unit of Podlipec *et al* would include no means for enabling the mounting/de-mounting of a printing screen, insofar as the tensioning bars (5) would be permanently outwardly biased.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the subject-matter of claims 8 to 10, 12, 20 to 23, 33 and 41 is patentably distinguished over the disclosures of Podlipec *et al* and Williams.

Allowable Subject-Matter

The Examiner has kindly indicated that claims 24 to 26 would be allowable if written in independent form.

Accordingly, claim 24 is being put in independent form, with claims 25 and 26 being dependent thereon.

It is also noted that no objection has been raised to claim 32, and it is thus understood that this claim would be allowable if written in independent form.

Claim 32 is thus also being put in independent form.

The absence in this reply of any comments on any other contentions set forth in the Office Action should not be construed to be an acquiescence therein. Rather, no comment is needed since the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

/Don W. Bulson/

By _____
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113

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